

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar de la Guerra; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters in Kennebunkport, Maine

June 29, 1991

Supreme Court Nominee

The President. Look at all these happy faces out here. Otherwise, they'd be sleeping. [Laughter]

Q. Exactly. Thanks for having us here.

The President. One thing, you go to bed early up here.

Q. Is it true that Ken Raynor is one of the finalists for the Supreme Court? [Laughter]

The President. We're looking for a big Justice.

Q. Have you decided yet, Mr. President, on your choice?

The President. Not yet—6 in the morning. [Laughter]

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, anything new from Iraq as far as the situation in—

The President. No.

Q. Did you hear the announcement today that Hussein says he'll let the U.N. team in?

The President. Heard that, but he's been lying so much. I hope like heck he's telling the truth this time.

President's Golf Game

Q. How you doing, Mr. President—good round?

The President. Very good, yes. I played very well today. So, don't judge me by that last shot—no. [Laughter] Better, though, a little better.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, can you give us an update on the situation with Iraq, what's going on as far as the inspections, what you're hearing?

The President. Well, what I'm hearing is we've got our policy, and we've got to start doing a lot of diplomacy on this matter. It's very disturbing. And you heard the

world reaction from this, so we're just considering, as I mentioned yesterday, what needs to be done. He must comply with United Nations resolutions. This concept of going in there and lying and shooting in the air to scare international observers is just something that cannot be condoned.

Now, he did make some statement today, but I've heard that before. So, I want to see full implementation of those U.N. resolutions, and so does everybody else. We have a serious situation and this man—I haven't changed my view about what it's going to take to have good relations with the United States. But this interim thing of keeping his word and then breaking it by harassing international inspectors is simply unacceptable to everybody. So, I'll leave it there.

Q. Would you consider a military option, Mr. President?

The President. I've said all I want to say about it. We will review the bidding and some diplomacy involved here. This is a U.N. resolution. That means there's a lot of people involved in it. But we feel that the authority exists for that under existing resolutions, 678 having been incorporated into the last resolution. So, it's a serious situation, it's not just one—

Q. Would you favor giving him a deadline to comply, sir?

The President. I don't—I'll just leave it where we are.

Q. Well, sir, do you think the fact that he didn't allow two inspections was stalling for time so he could try to cover up and hide—

The President. No question. No question about it. The intelligence is incontrovertible. And everybody that's seen it—there's no dispute. I mean, this isn't even a question. And I think those in the United States

and others that have seen the evidence are just convinced of it. I mean, it's visible; it's clear.

Q. What do you mean when you say "re-view the bidding," sir?

The President. What I mean is we've got plenty of time to think everything over and a concerted international effort. The great success of Desert Storm was that the world opinion and the United Nations backing up world opinion or molding world opinion was very important. And this one—I think you've already seen a worldwide reaction against this. But you have to do certain things, and we're taking the steps.

Q. Does his action surprise you in the wake of what happened to him in Desert Storm?

The President. No, no. It doesn't surprise me in the wake of what's been going on since Desert Storm, either.

Q. Does the time give him a chance to further hide these things?

The President. Sure, yes.

Q. And does that not make it more difficult to deal with?

The President. It makes it more difficult. Anytime you're cheating and lying and hiding complicates things.

Q. Are you holding open a military option?

The President. I haven't discussed military option or any other option. I'm just leaving it where it is. And as I say, in our view, the United Nations resolutions, existing resolutions, clearly give sanction to that. But it's premature to discuss what might be done by the United States and others. We've got some consultation to do, just as we did leading up to Desert Storm on the diplomatic front.

But it's a troubling matter, and there's

no question about it. This isn't—when you see their man standing up at the U.N. and lying, it just takes me back to where things were before they were wiped out on the battlefield.

Q. Are you planning consultations today, sir, with any of your staff?

The President. Well, lots going on. I'm not, but we've set in train some diplomatic action, so there will be plenty of consultation today and in the future, Secretary Baker carrying the main responsibility for that as he did in diplomacy before. But we're in close touch with the situation, obviously, and concerned about it.

Supreme Court Nominee

Q. —Supreme Court nominee this weekend, sir?

The President. Remember the old expression "stay tuned"? Stay tuned.

Q. Are you going to be conferring with anyone today in Washington on that?

The President. Oh, I'm talking all the time to Washington, yes. But I certainly like being up here.

Q. Have you already made up your mind?

The President. No.

Thank you all. You've got the whole day now until we play again this afternoon.

Note: The session took place at the Cape Arundel Golf Course. The President teed-off at 6:23 a.m., and the questions were asked at various intervals during the game. In the session, reporters referred to Kenneth C. Raynor, the club professional for the golf course; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Secretary of State James A. Baker III. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this session.